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**The metamorphosis of the “Sick man of East Asia”:
Bodily discourse in the Chinese Press Coverage of Foreign
and Chinese Athletes at the Olympics, 1984-2012**

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The purpose of this research is to conduct a content analysis of bodily-related discourse in the Chinese press coverage of Chinese athletes and foreign athletes to test the hypothesis that the growing success of Chinese participation in the modern Olympics has reshaped the Chinese body perception. It also attempts to explore modern China's role in the world and its relations with other countries and regions. The content analysis searched for Olympic-related sport articles and/or headlines containing the Chinese characters for body ‘身’ (pinyin: Shen) / ‘体’ (pinyin: Ti) during the eight summer Olympics that China has taken part in since 1984, in two Chinese newspapers: Titan

Sport and the People's Daily. The articles were analyzed for positive and negative bodily characteristics, and coded for the attribution of these characteristics to Chinese and foreign athletes. Further comparisons were made between the Chinese and major opponents from East Asia and the West (namely Europe and North America). The presentation will interpret the hidden message behind the bodily representation of Chinese athletes such as the ways in which Chinese athletes are perceived to be physically inferior to athletes from the west but physically superior to fellow East Asian athletes.